

## WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An encoding apparatus for encoding frame data containing image data and sound data, comprising:
  - separating means for separating the image data and sound data contained in the frame data;
  - image data encoding means for encoding the separated image data in sequence from a lower to a higher frequency component thereof, thereby generating image encoded data;
  - sound data encoding means for encoding the separated sound data in sequence from a lower to a higher frequency component thereof, thereby generating sound encoded data; and
  - frame encoded data generating means for generating header information by using the image encoded data and the sound encoded data, and generating frame encoded data by using the header information, the image encoded data, and the sound encoded data.
2. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the header information contains at least one of the size of the image data, image type information of the image data, the length of the image encoded data, the length of the sound encoded data, identification information of said encoding apparatus, the transmission date and time, the start address of the image encoded data, and the start address of the sound encoded data.
3. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said

image data encoding means generates a transform coefficient sequence for subbands by performing discrete wavelet transform for the image data, groups subbands of the same level, and sequentially encodes 5 the transform coefficient sequence from a lower- to a higher-level subband, thereby generating the image encoded data.

4. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said sound data encoding means generates a transform coefficient sequence for subbands by performing discrete wavelet transform for the sound data, groups subbands of the same level, and sequentially encodes 10 the transform coefficient sequence from a lower- to a higher-level subband, thereby generating the sound encoded data.

5. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said frame encoded data generating means generates the frame encoded data by arranging the header information, the image encoded data, and the sound encoded data in the 15 order named.

6. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said frame encoded data generating means generates the frame encoded data by grouping subbands of the same level in the image encoded data and the sound encoded data, and 20 arranging the groups in ascending order of level 25 following the header information.

7. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said

frame encoded data generating means generates the frame encoded data by using quasi-frame encoded data composed of a portion of the image encoded data and a portion of the sound encoded data.

- 5 8. An encoding apparatus for encoding frame data containing image data and sound data, comprising:
  - separating means for separating the image data and the sound data contained in the frame data;
  - image data encoding means for hierarchizing the image data into a plurality of types of image data and encoding the plurality of types of image data, thereby generating image encoded data corresponding to a plurality of levels;
  - sound data encoding means for hierarchizing the sound data into a plurality of types of sound data and encoding the plurality of types of sound data, thereby generating sound encoded data corresponding to a plurality of levels; and
  - frame encoded data generating means for generating frame encoded data by using the image encoded data and the sound encoded data,
    - wherein said frame encoded data generating means generates the frame encoded data by forming a plurality of groups of different levels by grouping the image encoded data and sound encoded data belonging to the same level determined on the basis of a predetermined reference, and arranging the plurality of groups in

descending order of significance level.

9. The apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the plurality of types of image data hierarchized by said image data encoding means correspond to a plurality of 5 frequency components obtained by discrete wavelet transform of the image data.

10. The apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the plurality of types of sound data hierarchized by said sound data encoding means correspond to speech data 10 which corresponds to a human voice and non-speech data other than the speech data.

11. The apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said frame encoded data generating means groups encoded data of the speech data as sound encoded data of significant 15 level together with first image encoded data, and groups encoded data of the non-speech data as sound encoded data of insignificant level together with second image encoded data.

12. The apparatus according to claim 11, wherein 20 the plurality of types of image data hierarchized by said image data encoding means contain a first frequency component obtained by discrete wavelet transform of the image data and a second frequency component higher than the first frequency component, 25 and

the first and second image encoded data correspond to the first and second frequency components,

respectively.

13. The apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the plurality of types of sound data hierarchized by said sound data encoding means correspond to speech data 5 which corresponds to a human voice and not less than two non-speech data obtained by hierarchizing non-speech data other than the speech data.

14. The apparatus according to claim 12, wherein said frame encoded data generating means

10 groups encoded data of the speech data as sound encoded data of most significant level together with the first image encoded data,

groups encoded data of first non-speech data obtained by hierarchizing the non-speech data, as sound 15 encoded data of level significant next to the most significant level, together with the second image encoded data, and

groups encoded data of second non-speech data other than the first non-speech data, obtained by 20 hierarchizing the non-speech data, together with third image encoded data.

15. The apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the plurality of types of image data hierarchized by said image data encoding means contain a first frequency 25 component obtained by discrete wavelet transform of the image data, a second frequency component higher than the first frequency component, and a third frequency

component higher than the second frequency component,  
and

the first, second, and third image encoded data  
correspond to the first, second, and third frequency  
5 components, respectively.

16. The apparatus according to claim 8, wherein said  
frame encoded data generating means groups the image  
encoded data and the sound encoded data by selectively  
using a plurality of types of grouping methods.

10 17. The apparatus according to claim 16, wherein the  
plurality of types of grouping methods include a  
grouping method which gives priority to image quality  
and a grouping method which gives priority to sound  
quality.

15 18. The apparatus according to claim 16, further  
comprising:

transmitting means for transmitting the frame  
encoded data;

detecting means for detecting a decoding status  
20 of the transmitted frame encoded data; and

control means for switching the grouping methods  
in accordance with the detected decoding status.

19. An encoding method of encoding frame data  
containing image data and sound data, comprising:

25 the separating step of separating the image data  
and the sound data contained in the frame data;

the image data encoding step of encoding the

separated image data in sequence from a lower to a higher frequency component thereof, thereby generating image encoded data;

the sound data encoding step of encoding the  
5 separated sound data in sequence from a lower to a  
higher frequency component thereof, thereby generating  
sound encoded data; and

the frame encoded data generating step of generating header information by using the image encoded data and the sound encoded data, and generating frame encoded data by using the header information, the image encoded data, and the sound encoded data.

20. An encoding method of encoding frame data containing image data and sound data, comprising:

15 the separating step of separating the image data  
and the sound data contained in the frame data;

the image data encoding step of hierarchizing the image data into a plurality of types of image data and encoding the plurality of types of image data, thereby generating image encoded data corresponding to a plurality of levels;

the sound data encoding step of hierarchizing the sound data into a plurality of types of sound data and encoding the plurality of types of sound data, thereby generating sound encoded data corresponding to a plurality of levels; and

the frame encoded data generating step of

generating frame encoded data by using the image encoded data and the sound encoded data,

wherein the frame encoded data generating step generates the frame encoded data by forming a plurality 5 of groups of different levels by grouping the image encoded data and sound encoded data belonging to the same level determined on the basis of a predetermined reference, and arranging the plurality of groups in descending order of significance level.

10 21. A program which, when executed by a computer, allows the computer to function as an encoding apparatus for encoding frame data containing image data and sound data, comprising:

a code of the separating step of separating the 15 image data and the sound data contained in the frame data;

a code of the image data encoding step of encoding the separated image data in sequence from a lower to a higher frequency component thereof, thereby 20 generating image encoded data;

a code of the sound data encoding step of encoding the separated sound data in sequence from a lower to a higher frequency component thereof, thereby generating sound encoded data; and

25 a code of the frame encoded data generating step of generating header information by using the image encoded data and the sound encoded data, and generating

frame encoded data by using the header information, the image encoded data, and the sound encoded data.

22. A program which, when executed by a computer, allows the computer to function as an encoding

5 apparatus for encoding frame data containing image data and sound data, comprising:

a code of the separating step of separating the image data and the sound data contained in the frame data;

10 a code of the image data encoding step of hierarchizing the image data into a plurality of types of image data and encoding the plurality of types of image data, thereby generating image encoded data corresponding to a plurality of levels;

15 a code of the sound data encoding step of hierarchizing the sound data into a plurality of types of sound data and encoding the plurality of types of sound data, thereby generating sound encoded data corresponding to a plurality of levels; and

20 a code of the frame encoded data generating step of generating frame encoded data by using the image encoded data and the sound encoded data,

25 wherein the frame encoded data generating step generates the frame encoded data by forming a plurality of groups of different levels by grouping the image encoded data and sound encoded data belonging to the same level determined on the basis of a predetermined

reference, and arranging the plurality of groups in descending order of significance level.

23. A recording medium recording the program according to claim 21.

5 24. A recording medium recording the program  
according to claim 22.

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